

CRAFTS STUDY CENTRE
COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY
2023–2027

Name of governing body: Crafts Study Centre Trustees and Crafts Study Centre Management Group

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: January 2023

Policy review procedure: The Collections Development Policy will be reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: October 2027

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation

1.1. Development of the Policy

The previous Collections Development Policy for the period 2018–2023 was written after a series of meetings between the Director and Curator of the Crafts Study Centre (CSC) and expert advisors on the Acquisition Committee, within their specialist subject groupings. In December 2020, Trustee Deirdre Figueiredo addressed the Committee at a special meeting to introduce the issue of diversity – or lack thereof – in the CSC’s collecting and collections, and it was recommended that the Committee review and revise Section 4 of the Policy (Themes and priorities for future collecting). The Committee met on several occasions throughout 2021 to work on these revisions.

The revisions were finalised by the Acquisition Committee in February 2022. The Policy was reviewed by the Trustees in March 2022, and formally approved by the Trustees on 11 October 2022. It was formally approved by the Management Committee on 24 January 2023.

The policy is published on the Crafts Study Centre website, www.csc.uca.ac.uk

1.2. The Crafts Study Centre’s statement of purpose is:

To be a national centre for craft research, exhibitions and collections.

The statement of purpose is described in the Crafts Study Centre’s Business Plan as a ‘vision’. The Business plan is the key policy and operational document for the Centre and it is reviewed annually by Trustees and the University.

1.3. Crafts Study Centre Business Plan

The Business Plan is the overarching document for the management and programme of the Crafts Study Centre. It sets out the key aim of the Centre:

- To give access to 20th century and contemporary crafts in order to develop understanding and enjoyment for diverse audiences.

In addition, the Centre has a specific objective related to the function of collecting:

- To safeguard and develop the Crafts Study Centre’s collections, and make them and the Crafts Study Centre accessible to the widest possible audience.

Within this specific objective lies the ongoing task ‘to add to the collections according to the Collections Development Policy’.

1.4. The Joint Agreement

The Joint Agreement between the Trustees of the Crafts Study Centre and the University for the Creative Arts describes in detail the roles and responsibilities of various management and specialist committees. The Management Committee of the Crafts Study Centre takes a scrutiny role on policy, working in close consort with the Acquisition Committee. The Collections Development Policy will be adhered to at all times by both the Management Committee and the Acquisition Committee.

1.5. The Acquisition Committee

The Crafts Study Centre has benefited almost since its establishment and from the outset of its life as a public museum collection holding objects and archives in trust, from advice and guidance on collecting material evidence of craft practice and process. This advice has been given in the context of a formal Acquisition Committee,

chaired by a member of the Crafts Study Centre's Board of Trustees. The make-up of the Committee has been led by the principle that senior and distinguished craft practitioners, as well as senior curators and historians of the crafts, should form the membership. The terms of reference for the Committee were amended in 2004, observing the principle that it should be a practitioner-led group.

The Acquisition Committee comprises two expert advisors for each of the subject areas represented in the collection: textiles, calligraphy and lettering, ceramics, furniture and wood, and archives. The Board of Trustees appoints a Chair of the Acquisition Committee, with one other Trustee as an ex-officio member of the Committee. The Director is an ex-officio member of the Committee.

1.6. Resources and space

Resources and space are factors which limit the capacity of the Crafts Study Centre to add very significant numbers of objects to the collections. The current stores have reached full capacity, and this will inevitably mean that additions to the collections will be of individual items, or smaller groups of items, manageable in scale. Alternatively, formal partnerships with external organisations to store or display material off site will be discussed if this is in the best interests of both organisations and the care of the collections.

The Board of Trustees have committed £10,000 for the purchase of items over the period of the policy, and grants will be sought to increase this amount for particular items, for example from the Art Fund, the Victoria & Albert Museum purchase fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1.7. Policy statement

The Acquisition Committee operates on behalf of the Trustees to recommend additions to the permanent collections by gift, bequest, purchase, donation and other appropriate means. It has an annual budget of £2,000. The Committee will only consider loans in exceptional circumstances, and there will be a strong presumption against loans. The Committee works with the Director and Curator to oversee the development of the collections in accordance with the Collections Development Policy.

The Acquisition Committee meets as required, usually twice a year, to review potential additions to the collection (where this is practicable). Executive authority to add work to the collections in accordance with the Collections Development Policy is vested, in addition, in the post of the Director. The Director will take account of the advice of expert advisors and consult with them, in between Committee meetings, where it is essential to make a decision.

1.8. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

1.9. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

1.10. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

- 1.11. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.12. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.13. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

2. History of the collections

The idea for the Crafts Study Centre has its origins in 1964 and the death of the hand-blockprinter, Phyllis Barron, who left her life's work together with that of her partner, Dorothy Larcher, to the etcher and educationist Robin Tanner. Between 1965 and 1967 Robin and his wife, Heather, mounted three memorial exhibitions of their textiles and associated material, prompting many people to urge for a permanent home to be found for their work. From this was born the idea of a creating a collection of the best work of the artist-craftsmen of the twentieth century – along with their records, writings, and papers – which could be handled, seriously studied and enjoyed.

In November 1967, a determined group of concerned makers and educationists, many of them friends of Robin and Heather Tanner and who had known Barron and Larcher, held their first meeting to explore the possibilities. A statement of policy and aims was drafted, which set out the principles for collecting:

“The present moment offers unique opportunities to assemble, before it is irretrievably dispersed, examples of the output of those pioneers, such as Bernard Leach, who began work after the First World War, and who found themselves obliged to rediscover, largely by trial and error, many of the techniques which industrial development had obscured or retarded. Their work shows not only a finely judged sense of quality in their choice of material but also a deep understanding of basic simplicities, giving it today a particular value for education at all levels from the young child to the adult. It establishes a criterion of craftsmanship and could be a continuing source of inspiration not only for the ordinary visitor but for student and professional, through whom could come a strong influence upon industrial design. A body of work of this quality, in pottery, wood, metal, woven and printed textiles, embroidery, is already available as, for example, the substantial collection of block-printed textiles left by Phyllis Barron and Dorothy Larcher and, if it could be properly housed, more would be readily contributed or bequeathed.”

The Crafts Study Centre gained charitable status in 1970. Its founding Trustees were: Ewart Uncles (Chair), Muriel Rose, Robin Tanner, Henry Hammond, Marianne Straub and Christine Smale. A home was sought for the collection and it was ultimately agreed to be the Holburne Museum of Art in Bath, where the Crafts Study Centre opened to the public in 1977. Barley Roscoe, the Centre's part-time Research Assistant, was appointed full-time to run it, and later became Director of both the Holburne Museum and Crafts Study Centre. In 2000, the Centre moved to the Surrey Institute of Art & Design in Farnham, and a special-purpose building to house the Centre was built, opening in 2004. Professor Simon Olding

took over as Director in 2002, and Jean Vacher took on the role of Curator 2004–2017. The Crafts Study Centre became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2018, charity number 1179008.

Very soon after the forming of the charity in 1970, numerous offers of material began to come in. Some of the most significant of this early collecting includes:

Ceramics

- Bernard Leach presented nearly 85 of his pots, together with his source collection, and subsequently bequeathed his archive.
- Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie, one of Leach's first students at St Ives, gave a substantial collection of her pots, together with fine examples of work by her friends and contemporaries Michael Cardew and Norah Braden.
- Henry Hammond bequeathed his archive together with pieces from his collection.
- The coveted Lucie Rie archive was acquired in 1998, which complemented an impressive group of work in the collection by Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, two of the most significant figures in British post-war pottery.

Textiles

- Robin Tanner bequeathed his collection of work by Phyllis Barron and Dorothy Larcher, including lengths, garments, samples, printing blocks and source materials.
- Susan Bosence, who took up blockprinting textiles after seeing Barron and Larcher's work in the 1940s, donated her own collection and archive.
- Marianne Straub, executor for Ethel Mairet, an important and influential weaver from the 1920s onwards, ensured that Ethel Mairet's Workshop was fully represented.
- Ella McLeod, Head of Textiles at the West Surrey College of Art & Design, placed a representative and significant group of weaving by Elizabeth Peacock with the collection.
- Rita Beales bequeathed her collection of finely woven linen and wool textiles, and her entire estate.

Calligraphy

- The Johnston family donated the work of Edward Johnston, one of the most important figures in the history of modern calligraphy.
- Irene Wellington, one of Johnston's pupils, donated a significant collection of her own work.
- Heather Child donated work from her personal collection of calligraphy by various calligraphers.

3. An overview of current collections

3.1. Object collections

The Crafts Study Centre's object collections comprise approximately 8,000 items across the subject areas of ceramics, textiles (weave and print), calligraphy and lettering, and wood and furniture. Within these disciplines are sub-collections, described as 'source collections', which were collected by craft makers for inspiration, enjoyment and knowledge. These include those owned by Ethel Mairet, Bernard Leach, Phyllis Barron and Dorothy Larcher, and Peter Collingwood.

- **Ceramics:** The ceramics collection dates broadly from c.1920 to present day. Many pioneer and leading studio potters are represented, including: Paul Barron, Richard Batterham, Michael Cardew, Simon Carroll, Hans Coper, Philip Eglin, T.S. (Sam) Haile, Henry Hammond, Bernard Leach, Gillian Lowndes Katharine

Pleydell-Bouverie and Norah Braden, Lucie Rie, William Staite Murray, and Denise Wren.

- **Textiles:** The Centre holds the major collection and archive of Phyllis Barron (1890–1964) and Dorothy Larcher (1884–1952), two of the leading hand-blockprinters of textiles working in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s. The furnishing and dress materials which this unique partnership produced first in London and then in the Cotswolds are noted for their innovative designs printed in subtle colours on quality materials. Also included in the printed textiles collection are pieces by Enid Marx, designer of posters for the London Underground, book illustrator and author of several books; Joyce Clissold of the Footprints workshop; and Barron and Larcher's protégé Susan Bosence.

The Centre holds a strong collection of 20th century hand-woven textiles and represents a broad spectrum of makers in this medium. Significant of these are Ethel Mairet (whose workshop in Ditchling in Sussex was seminal in the training of a whole generation of weavers from the 1930s and 1940s), Elizabeth Peacock, Barbara Sawyer, Theo Moorman, Alice Hindson, Marianne Straub (who also designed for industry and is remembered for her upholstery designs for the London Underground), Rita Beales (renowned for her use of linen in weave), Ursula Brock, rugs by Gwen and Barbara Mullins. Later 20th century collections include panels by Peter Collingwood and Amelia Uden, work by Ann Lander, Anne Richards, Alison Morton, Sue Hartree, Geraldine St Aubyn-Hubbard and ikat-woven pieces by Mary Restieaux.

The Centre also holds a small but significant collection of embroidered items, including table linen worked by May Morris and embroidery by the Cotswold-based artist Eve Simmonds.

- **Calligraphy and lettering:** The calligraphy collection consists largely of work by the first two generations of British calligraphers to emerge from the early 20th century revival led by Edward Johnston. The Centre holds a large body of work by Johnston and an equally large collection by that of his pupil at the Royal College of Art, Irene Wellington. The Centre has a small but growing collection of contemporary work by Ewan Clayton, Hazel Dolby and Thomas Ingmire and, through their generous donations, Ann Hechle and John Woodcock, and some seventy named 20th century calligraphers are represented through one or two works each. A Heritage Lottery Fund grant, 'Collecting Cultures', enabled the Centre to purchase drawings and archive material relating to work by the internationally renowned letter carver, Ralph Beyer (1921–2008), celebrated for his commission in Basil Spence's new Coventry Cathedral which is of immense significance in the history of 20th century British public lettering. The Centre is awaiting the acquisition of the collection from the Edward Johnston Foundation.
- **Furniture and wood:** The furniture and wood collections reflect the varied and closely-connected nature of the early modern crafts movement. Furniture by leading Cotswold makers such as Ernest Gimson, Harry Davoll, Sidney Barnsley and Edward Gardiner is represented alongside chairs from the workshop of William Morris, string puppets and sculpture by William Simmonds, and carved wooden buttons by Percy Beales. Designer-makers such as Gordon Russell and Edward Barnsley, who strove to make good design more affordable for everyday living, are included in the collections. A substantial collection of carved wooden bowls and boxes by David Pye (Professor of Furniture Design at the Royal College

of Art from 1948 to 1974), together with his wood-turning engine, lathe and associated tools form an important part of our collections.

3.2. Archive collections

The archives, of which there are about 50,000 items, support an understanding of the objects in the collections. There are approximately 40,000 catalogued or inventoried items, and a further 10,000 recently-acquired items. The archives include corporate records, such as from selling galleries like The Little Gallery, the Oxford Gallery and Galerie Besson and records of guilds, such as the Red Rose Guild. The archives also contain the Centre's own papers.

Personal papers, including letters, diaries, sketch books and photographs, support an understanding of the life and work of the craftspeople associated with them. The archives relate to such makers as Bernard Leach, William Staite Murray, Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie, Michael Cardew, Denise and Rosemary Wren, Lucie Rie, Henry Hammond and Janet Leach in ceramics; Barron and Larcher, Ethel Mairet and Rita Beales in textiles; Edward Johnston and Irene Wellington in calligraphy; and Arthur Romney Green and Alan Peters in furniture and wood. The papers of Robin and Heather Tanner, although not relating to the key areas for collecting outlined in this policy, provide a unique insight into the life and work of a founder of the Crafts Study Centre and his role within the history of the modern crafts movement.

3.3. Library collections

The Crafts Study Centre also has a Library with an extensive collection of books and periodicals relating to the field of craft generally and to the particular disciplines set out above. It also includes the library collections of individual makers, and copies of publications featuring objects and archival material from the Centre.

The Library collections are not covered by this policy.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The collection will continue to focus on the key subject areas of:

- Ceramics
- Textiles (printed, painted or dyed, and woven textiles)
- Calligraphy and lettering
- Furniture and wood
- Archives (paper, film, photographic and born-digital)

The addition of craft objects in new subject areas will be the subject of special approval of the Trustees, on the advice of the Acquisition Committee, mindful, in particular, of the current constraints of space and resources on the development of new collections.

Acquisitions will satisfy the Centre's aim of encouraging understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of twentieth and twenty-first century craft. The selection should illustrate a combination of aesthetic and technical excellence; or be of significance to craft practice past, present and future; or demonstrate a skilled use of materials and the application of craft techniques to achieve particular qualities in the work. Specialist external advice will be sought when significant aspects of the work lie beyond the expertise of the representatives on the Acquisition Committee.

Acquisitions will be made principally of work by makers based in the British Isles, including by those from sections of society that have been marginalised from the canon of studio craft. Due consideration will be given to gender and background, and work from diverse, diaspora, migrant and regional communities. Work by makers based outside the British Isles may be collected where the work has connections to British craft practice, both in terms of individual objects or of wider collections of research materials that have directly informed a maker's practice (for example, the Peter Collingwood ethnographic collection).

Specific statements for each of the subject areas for the period 2021–2026 are shown below. The Acquisition Committee will also exercise a 'ones to watch' policy, with a view to collecting the work of an individual once a career progression and development is clear and acknowledged by the wider field.

4.1. Ceramics

The great strengths of the existing ceramics collection are from the modernist period: Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada, Michael Cardew, Lucie Rie, Hans Coper. It has been our intention to seek new acquisitions from the subsequent decades and the postmodern period, as well as contemporary figures working in traditional ways. We will also want to acquire work from more recently established practices, and to look into developments in recent work from the emerging strand of ceramics made through digital technologies that are expanding the horizon of the discipline.

4.2. Textiles

Acquisitions will continue to focus on printed, painted or dyed and woven textiles, designed and made by one or more practitioners, essentially acknowledging the hand of the maker, with the emphasis on skill, processes, and techniques.

Collecting will seek to represent the expanding breadth and depth of the discipline to include established and emerging traditions, across both analogue and digital tools or technologies. Acquisitions research will consider innovative approaches rooted in print, paint, and dye; and woven construction in tapestry, diverse loom-based and 'off-loom' techniques, as well as evidencing expertise in use of both natural and synthetic materials and colouring agents.

The discipline will aim to augment existing collections by looking out for recent or additional work by represented makers. Collecting will also seek to acknowledge and record long-established and contemporary 'designer-maker' practices, where handmade prototypes and sophisticated collaborations allow for the making of high-quality textile products, both independently and within the context of the design studio or business.

4.3. Calligraphy and lettering

The CSC's lettering collection represents only a small part of the lettering arts, and is limited by both practical constraints and the need to ensure a strong craft element. Most of the work in the collection thus falls into the categories of calligraphy, lettercarving or other sculptural lettering, and lettering which is painted, drawn or applied by methods such as engraving, stitching, etc.

In general, the lettering collection will concentrate on work in which lettering is the main component, and in which the hand has played a significant role in its execution (as opposed to, for example, printed or on-screen lettering using a pre-designed typeface). Work should exemplify a high degree of skill in the design, making and use of lettering, though this need not be of a traditional kind, and originality is valued. Work may have been created in response to a formal commission, or for more personal or expressive purposes. Good quality

rubbings, drawings or sketches may be acquired if an original work cannot, or where they illuminate an original work, or have merit as original works in their own right.

New acquisitions will aim to strengthen the collection's representation of work by significant and influential makers, especially those working since the middle of the twentieth century, and will reflect a diverse range of approaches, not necessarily limited to use of the Latin alphabet.

4.4. Furniture and wood

New acquisitions will focus on furniture and small, domestic items of wood by individual makers. Notable work by any British maker will be considered to ensure that the best available work from the vibrant, eclectic and diverse field of woodwork is represented. To this end, we will specifically undertake research to identify makers from a wider cultural background than is currently represented. We will also explore alternative ways of 'collecting' within this discipline, such as plans, drawings, models, photographs and other physical or digital representations.

4.5. Archives

Archival material relating to all makers represented in the collection will be sought. This includes archival material that relates to or accompanies the Centre's temporary exhibition programme and new acquisitions (to add to the context of a purchase or gift). Archives will be considered from individuals, institutions, charitable bodies, guilds and advocacy organisations that represent the skilled use of materials and application of craft techniques in all its manifestations. Our intention is to build an archival collection that helps deepen our understanding of British studio craft, acknowledges the global interactions and networks that underpinned its development, and reflects the diversity of craft practice throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In addition, the papers, manuscripts, and archive material of craft writers and craft historians will be considered. The addition of craft objects in new subject areas will be the subject of special approval of the Trustees, on the advice of the Acquisition Committee, mindful, in particular, of the current constraints of space and resources on the development of new collections.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1. The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

5.2. The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

6.1. The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7. Collecting policies of other museums

7.1. The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.2. **Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):**

- Crafts Council
- Victoria & Albert Museum
- British Council
- Other relevant craft collections held in public and charitable institutions

8. Archival holdings

8.1. Management of archives

The Crafts Study Centre holds a substantial number of archives, which include photographs and printed ephemera – see **section 3.2** for an overview of the current archival holdings. As such, the governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

The themes and priorities for future collecting of archival material are set out in **section 4.5**.

8.2. Acceptance of archival material – terms and conditions

Archive material will be assessed for its suitability at the point of acquisition. It will be made clear to donors that the Crafts Study Centre has the right to acquire only a selected part of an archive and to filter 'unsuitable' items (and possibly offer them back to the donor before being disposed of or transferred to another institution).

8.3. Material deemed 'unsuitable'

The Acquisition Committee has identified the following types of archival material as potentially 'unsuitable' for inclusion in the Crafts Study Centre:

- Items not matching the CSC's collecting policy
- Duplicates/photocopies
- Poor quality photographs/numerous photographs of the same subject
- Empty envelopes and packaging
- Published material/material in the public domain
- Material which provides minimal business information

Unsuitable archival items in the collections will be disposed of according to the Museum Association's ethical guidelines on disposal. However, there may be instances where no suitable home can be found. A plan for the disposal of this material will be agreed in consultation with the Centre's Trustees.

9. Acquisition

9.1. All acquisitions to the permanent collection must comply with the Collections Development Policy and must be approved by the Acquisition Committee, which usually meets twice a year. Donors/vendors are advised of the date of the next Acquisition Committee meeting and of how long they will have to wait before a decision has been made. This is usually up to six months, but if longer they will be

notified by the Curator. Executive authority to add work to the collections in accordance with the Collections Development Policy is also vested in the post of the Director, who will take account of the advice of expert advisors and consult with them, in between Committee meetings, where it is essential to make a decision. Once the Committee has met and a decision has been taken, the donor/vendor shall be notified of the decision.

The Crafts Study Centre will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

- 9.2.** The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- 9.3.** In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2005.

10. Human remains

- 10.1.** The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

11. Biological and geological material

- 11.1.** So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

12. Archaeological material

- 12.1.** The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

13. Exceptions

- 13.1.** Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin

- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14. Spoliation

- 14.1** The museum will use the statement of principles ‘Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period’, issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 15.1** The museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the museum’s professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the ‘Guidance for the care of human remains in museums’ issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

16. Disposal procedures

- 16.1** All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2** The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3** When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4** When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5** The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum’s collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

- 16.6** A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.8** If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the Museum Association's 'Find an Object' web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9** The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.10** Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.
- 16.11** The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12** Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13** The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The

governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

- 16.13.1** In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited Museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
- 16.13.2** If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited Museum, other Accredited Museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 16.13.3** If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited Museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the Museum Association's 'Find an Object' web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.13.4** Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved, both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.14** If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15** It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16** Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17** Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.18** The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.